A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, July 17. 1708.

YOU are to pardon me, Gentlemen, who read *Reviews*, if this Paper does not ſuit your common Taſt, as being a Subject concerning a Party only— Some time ago I beſtowed two Papers upon the Affair of the Prophets— I was in hopes that the Diſappointment of that Affair had laid their Expectations aſleep at leaſt; but I think my ſelf oblig'd to ſpeak ſomething more to the general of it, on Occaſion of a Letter ſent me ſometime ago upon that Subject.

The Letter is candid and ingenuous, and there being ſome part in it which I count material to ſpeak to; I could not excuſe my ſelf from printing the whole, leſt it might be ſuſpected, that I had conceal'd any Part to the Diſadvantage of the Perſon that wrote it—Who it is has wrote or ſent the ſaid Letter, I profeſs I know not, nor can I make the leaſt probable Gueſs, nor is it material; I ſhall ſpeak to it without Reſpect of Perſons, or Regard to Opinions.

The Letter is as follows.

June 10*th.* 1708.

SIR,

" AS you have hitherto ſhewn more " Candour than any other of the " Writers againſt the Prophets, it may be " reaſonably hop'd, you will not take ill " what Advice may with Civility be offer'd " to you. In the firſt Place then, pray take

" it

" it not amiss that you are advertis'd, that
" you have not dealt justly with Sir *Richard*
" *Bulkeley*, in charging him twice in your
" Prints, with the broaching of a Notion
" which is not his, and which he not only
" tells his Reader is Bishop *Stillingfleet*'s, but
" quotes the Book, the Page, and recites
" the Bishop's Words at length. This looks
" as if you were afraid the Bishop's Name
" would credit a Cause which you have, un-
" advicedly perhaps, taken up a Prejudice
" against. This is not indeed absolutely
" infer'd; but as you have appear'd a
" fair Dealer with the World all along, it
" is more reasonable to judge you have not
" read Sir *Richard Bulkeley*'s Book, or at
" least that you have but dipt into it. You
" have often charged others with Injustice,
" in writing against what they have not
" read; perhaps it may not be Labour lost
" in the Service of the Publick, if you
" would deliberately read it over, before
" you write any more; for as there has no
" one yet written against it, you may, by
" handling his Arguments fairly, (as I
" doubt not but you will do) contribute
" perhaps in undeceiving those who think
" that what he has said is true and justifia-
" ble, at least you will know what to charge
" him with, which you will find not to
" be so much as the World in general does.
" As to the seven first Lines, and no more,
" of his 8*th Page*, he does freely to every
" one own himself to be mistaken in, as to
" his Opinion or Judgment; but as he is
" not one of those whom they call Inspir'd,
" he does not take it, that his Opinion
" (since *Humanum est errare*) does at all
" affect the Cause it self.

" You have promised the World in your
" next, to consider the Person of the dead
" Man. For your Sake only, Sir, you are
" advised to remember, how odious, not
" to say sinful, Calumny is; but further
" *De Mortuis nil nisi Bonum* is what you
" have learn'd of Old, and often quoted.
" This is said, supposing what you would
" say should be Truth. But when you speak
" upon the Subject of Opinions or Morals,
" you cannot be sure of speaking Truth,
" how a Man dies to Godward, unless
" you had been at his Bedside, and either
" heard his last Confession of his Faith or
" his Penitence. God's Ways are not as
" our Ways, and it is happy for us. It is
" because he is God and not Man, that we
" are not consumed. Nothing less than
" infinite Long-suffering and Goodness
" could preserve any of us from the Eternal
" Punishments due to Offences against infi-
" nite Power and Justice. Remember,
" God has given himself his Name, that
" he is a *God forgiving Iniquity, Transgression*
" *and Sin*, and it is we that are the Transgressors if we paint him like ourselves,
" and narrow his Bowels to his Children.
" If we endeavour all to follow the same
" Rule of universal Charity to God and
" Man, which the Apostle gives us, we
" are by him assur'd, that in other things
" (especially Opinions) if we be otherwise
" minded, God will also reveal that unto
" us. He will not suffer those that fear,
" and love, and trust in him, to rest in
" Fundamental Errors. And whatever you
" may think of the Dead Man, they that
" knew him better, can testifie that he
" died not an Unbeliever of the Divinity of
" our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Orthodox
" Sense of the Word. So that if you would
" charge him more justly, it must be for
" his Morals, which tho' those who knew
" him well may think were too unreproach-
" able; yet if you knew any secret Sins of
" his, as is above observ'd, you should be
" sure he died impenitent of them, before
" you charge his Memory. But to return
" for a few Words more to the other Subject;
" your Pity is kind, and kindly accepted
" without doubt, by those who do not yet
" look upon themselves as proper Objects
" of it; but whose Faith in this Dispensa-
" tion, as they call it, is stronger than it
" was before the 28*th* Day of *May*. They
" are in no wise humbled by that Disap-
" pointment; which the same Spirit has
" declar'd to them, is one of God's Snares
" upon his Enemies, to deliver them up
" to Judicial Hardness. I speak of those
" Enemies who would not that the King-
" dom of Christ should take Place on
" Earth, and all Sensuality, Pride, and

" other

" other Ungodlineſs ſhould be aboliſhed " and done away. For you may read, " *Pſalm* 11. *That God has ſaid, he will rain* " *upon his Enemies Snares, Fire and Brim-* " *ſtone.* I muſt be conteſs'd, you have " too much Hurry of Buſineſs in the Poli- " ticks, to enter as much into this Argu- " ment, as it may perhaps require; and " even into Matter of Fact, otherwiſe you " would not, I ſeah of your two Parts, " have been guilty of a Negative Aſſer- " tion, which in Fact is very far from true; " *i. e.* that they have never predicted any " thing that has come to paſs. You will " hereupon reply, what have they ſo pre- " dicted? to which there is room here " only to anſwer, that that Queſtion had " been more properly made before the At- " ſertion. In fine, as you have hitherto " ſhown more modeſty in your other Aſſer- " tions, than any one who has yet drawn " his Pen upon the Subject; ſo you are, for " your own ſake, entreated to remember, " that it will be a Matter of Confuſion, of " Face, and Anguiſh of Soul, (if ever " it ſo appears) to have been found " fighting againſt God; have the Charity " to think that thoſe that do believe it to " be of God, are not Pupils, to take up " their Principles upon Truſt, but are " perhaps as ſollicitous for the Safety of " their Souls, as others, and undoubtedly " have taken more Pains to inquire into it, " than thoſe who do not believe it have " done; which latter have not been ſo " kind to the World as to aſſign the Delu- " ſion they ſo generally charge. This is " refer'd to your Conſideration, by

Your unknown Well wiſher.

I ſhall take the Liberty to ſpeak a Word only to two or three Parts of the Letter.

1. A Kind of a Charge, *tho' in modeſt Terms*, that I unfaithfully quote Sir *Richard Bulkeley*—in his ſaying *that it is not eſſential to a true Prophet that what he prophecies ſhould come to paſs*, which he not ſpoke as his own Speech, but as Biſhop *Stillingfleet*'s Words—Now tho' it were true, I did not mention the Word as a Quotation, yet I think, I did not wrong Sir *Richard* in this, becauſe the thing is not material in the Caſe, *as I offer'd it*, whole the Words are—but as they ſeem to be brought againſt the 25*th* of *May*, on which the great Expectation of the Prophets ſeem'd to depend, I thought the Suggeſtion no wrong to Sir *Richard*; *viz.* that this was now publiſh'd to prepare the Favourers of that Opinion to retain *or adhere* to their Opinion, tho' they ſhould be diſappointed; and if I did offer this alſo as a Teſtimony of their own Doubtfulneſs of its coming to paſs, I think I did him no Injuſtice, nor was it at all needful I ſhould examine, whether the Notion was Sir *Richard*'s own, or a Quotation from another— Since the Queſtion was not about the Author of the Words, but the publiſhing them at ſuch a Time which I ſay ſeem'd calculated by Sir *Richard* for ſuch a Purpoſe—— And this Suggeſtion ſeems very juſt ſtill.

2. The next Thing is a Caution to me, concerning what I ſhould ſay of the dead Perſon who was to be raiſ'd ——And really this I hope, I need not—for I appeal to the *Review*, in which I ſpoke of him, where I uſed the utmoſt Caution, and gave the Reaſon, why I was oblig'd to ſpeak of him at all—What I ſaid of his Socinianiſm, does not ſo much as inſinuate, that I ſhould determine, whether GOD gave him Repentance or no; my Words are thus, *I might ſay ſomething of the Perſon they pitch'd upon to work this Miracle upon; I ſhall be very ſhye of making Reflections on, or loading the Memory of the Dead, yet I muſt touch upon it.* REVIEW, Vol. V. No. 33. p. 130.

I was oblig'd by the Neceſſity of my Argument to ſay ſomething of him, but *whether he repented or no I do not preſume to ſay*, but leave it, ſo that if he did repent, then the Concluſion does not affect him ——— As for his Sins, Follies, Immoralities, or any Infirmities that might blacken his Character—There is not the leaſt Shadow of my offering at them, GOD forbid, I ſhould reproach any Man's Memory, or revive the Remembrance of thoſe Sins, that for ought I know, GOD may have forgiven; I deſire to let all the Crimes of the worſt Enemies, I have had, be bury'd in the Grave with them—— It is of the Living, and for the Uſe of the Living

that